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MAR 20 2007

REMARKS

Applicants appreciate the courtesy shown by the Examiner in discussing this application with the undersigned on March 1, 8, 9, and 14, 2007. The above amendments and the following remarks reflect the discussions. Claim 1 has been revised to require the presence of mannitol in the coating layer that is in the fine granules (i). Applicants appreciate the indication by the Examiner that this is considered sufficient to overcome the obviousness issues of the previous Office Action and that the Declaration offered near the bottom of page 7 of the previous Amendment is not considered necessary.

In addition, claim 1 has been revised editorially to clarify the relationship of the coating layers in the fine granules (i). Thus, the tablet of claim 1 includes "fine granules" (i). See pages 9-10 of the specification. The fine granules contain active agent, present in a component identified as the "composition". See pages 13-15 of the specification. Outside of the "composition", the fine granules comprise the enteric coating layer, and outside the enteric coating layer the fine granules comprise the further coating comprising mannitol. The term "composition" previously recited in claim 1 has been recharacterized as "first composition" simply for ease of identification within the claim framework, and continues to identify the same component. The particle size limitation in claim 1 continues to be applied to the "fine granules", which include the coating layers, in accordance for example with the discussion in the specification at pages 9-10 and page 30, lines 1-11. Applicants thus respectfully submit that claim 1 meets the definiteness requirement and is consistent with the present specification.

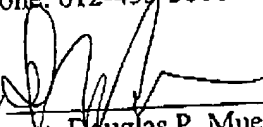
New dependent claim 54, requiring lansoprazole as a further limitation for the benzimidazole compound of claim 9, rounds out the scope of protection. The requirement of the presence of mannitol in the coating layer for the fine granules (i) in claim 1 precludes "same invention" double patenting over parent US 6,328,994 for claim 54. While claim 21 of the patent requires the presence of mannitol, it can be seen that this is in relation to the component (ii) through the dependence on claim 4. A Terminal Disclaimer over the '994 patent was submitted previously.

In view of the above, Applicants request reconsideration of the application in the form of a Notice of Allowance.

Respectfully submitted,

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Date: March 20 2007

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